

Advancing Workplace Gender Equality at Teleperformance Philippines

Case Study Report

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Cover: Picture of Teleperformance Philippines during the Membership Signing Ceremony on 29 November 2021.

Abbreviations

ASH	Anti-sexual harassment
BCs	Business Coalitions
BPO	Business Process Outsourcing
DE&I	Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia
EDGE	Economic Dividends for Gender Equality
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GEARS	Gender Equality Assessment Results and Strategies
HR	Human Resource
HROD	Human Resource Organisational Development
IT	Information Technology
IW	Investing in Women
PBCWE	Philippine Business Coalition for Women Empowerment
PHILWEN	Philippine Women's Economic Network
SVP	Senior Vice President
TP	Teleperformance
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment
WGE	Workplace Gender Equality

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Investing in Women (IW), an Australian Government funded initiative, supports Business Coalitions (BCs) who work with influential businesses on shifting workplace cultures, practices, and policy barriers to achieve workplace gender equality (WGE).

Teleperformance (TP) began operations in the Philippines in 1996 and has grown to become a preferred offshore contact center outsourcing option operating over 35,000 workstations in 24 business sites located across the country. By the end of 2022, the company had over 60,000 employees, of whom 62 percent were women. At most levels of the organization, there is a balanced gender composition, but at the executive management level, women account for only 23 percent. Board composition however is 44 percent women and 56 percent men.

This case study examines Teleperformance Philippines' experience in improving WGE as part of their engagement with the Philippine Business Coalition for Women Empowerment (PBCWE). The case study draws on qualitative and quantitative secondary sources and primary data from interviews and focus group discussions with TP and the PBCWE.

Engagement with the PBCWE

TP became a PBCWE member in November 2021. TP was motivated to join PBCWE because key leaders within the company wanted more clarity on how to integrate WGE into their broader Diversity, Inclusion and Equality (DE&I) agenda. Additionally, TP wanted to get a more robust and holistic plan of action for their WGE and DE&I program. TP's engagement with PBCWE began with a meeting of the minds or visioning exercise attended by representatives from TP Women (Teleperformance's employee resource group that celebrates women's achievements, seeks to address issues in the workplace, and helps drive positive change), DE&I, learning and development, and communications and marketing working groups. The strong representation from TP's various groups/departments in this meeting highlighted their strong commitment to this agenda. TP had already taken forward WGE initiatives, but they joined PBCWE for further technical advice and guidance that would help them refine and implement of their strategy, and to understand their status vis-à-vis others working in their sector.

Facilitated by PBCWE, TP conducted the Gender Equality Assessment Results and Strategies (GEARS) assessment from December 2021 to February 2022. The results were mostly positive but there were areas where further action needed to be taken (e.g., mandatory WGE training for staff, introduce accountability mechanisms for WGE outcomes, monitor and analyse performance appraisal and talents reviews by gender, etc.) With technical guidance from PBCWE, TP then completed a WGE Action Plan in April 2022. The company chose to take forward not just three strategic objectives recommended by PBCWE, but all ten objectives. PBCWE participated as a resource speaker in several learning sessions for TP including the #BreaktheBias Digital Forum livestreamed through the TP Philippines Facebook page in March 2022; Gender and Disability Intersectionality Forum in July 2022; and the WGE Training in September 2022 attended by the TP Women Core Team and site leaders. TP also participated in the quarterly and annual membership meetings with PBCWE in 2022.

Early Changes

Despite having a short time frame for implementation, this case study found some early indications of change and impact such as: an understanding of WGE concepts, issues, and approaches amongst employees; WGE and ASH trainings are established as mandatory courses for staff; improved WGE planning; improvements in leaders' accountability, skills, and knowledge; and enhancements in promotion, recruitment, and selection processes so that men and women benefit equally.

Key Drivers of Change

The case study has found a number of important factors that have driven change and improvements in WGE in TP, the most important of which are:

- **Sustained leadership, commitment, and accountability:** TP's executive management have committed to specific WGE targets as part of a larger strategy on DE&I. They have also allocated

resources to lead and implement TP's WGE Action Plan (i.e., TP Women Core Group, TP Women Board, with full time staff).

- **Defined company strategy to promote gender equality:** This has included the establishment of TP Women and TP Pride as a global network to promote WGE and address gender issues within the company.
- **Motivational awards:** TP's WGE work has resulted in receiving a Great Place to Work® for five consecutive years and one of the Philippines Best Workplace for the second year in a row. Their DE&I indicators have always received high scores under this award and the company strives to maintain or improve the scores on an annual basis.
- **Trusted Local Technical Support:** PBCWE have played an important role in guiding TP, in deepening their knowledge and understanding of WGE issues and in providing tangible examples of how to improve it through action planning, target setting, monitoring and strategy refinement.
- **Gender equality data, insights, and analytics:** PBCWE have played a key role in assisting TP in making use of the HR data they have gathered through analysis that includes applying a gender lens to gender disaggregated statistics.
- **Gender equality knowledge and skills.** Gaining new knowledge and a better appreciation of the WGE concepts and approaches has motivated TP to improve training for staff on WGE issues and improve key processes on recruitment, selection, and promotion. The company has also put in place accountability measures to mitigate and address gender-based harassment and discrimination should it arise.

TP's engagement on WGE is still relatively recent but the initiatives facilitated by PBCWE from 2021 to 2022 have helped TP understand why WGE matters and how to integrate specific targets into their DE&I agenda. As a result, TP has gained deeper knowledge and understanding. Also, they are now more adept at collecting and analysing data and refining strategies and action plans.

Introduction

Investing in Women (IW) is an Australian Government initiative that catalyses inclusive economic growth through women's economic empowerment in Southeast Asia. It was launched in 2016 and is operational in four Southeast Asian countries.

IW support Business Coalitions (BCs) who work with influential businesses on shifting workplace cultures, practices and policy barriers to achieve workplace gender equality (WGE). Business Coalitions are operational in Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, and Myanmar, with member companies together employing more than one million people.

Philippines Business Coalition for Women Empowerment (PBCWE) was established in March 2017 under the Philippine Women's Economic Network (PhilWEN) with IW's support. PBCWE is composed of members who are large businesses that are committed to improving gender equality in their workplaces, becoming better employers for women, and influencing other businesses within their supply chains to do the same. PBCWE reports to the PhilWEN Board on its contributions and achievements towards Sustainable Development Goal 5 - Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE).

This case study tells the story of how Teleperformance (TP) Philippines engaged with PBCWE to advance their WGE agenda. It also identifies what has changed as a result and what drove change. The case study concludes with insights and lessons.

Method

This case study draws on quantitative and qualitative data. Secondary sources include PBCWE project documents, and Teleperformance's records. Primary research draws on in-depth interviews held with TP's Senior Vice President for Human Capital Resource Management and other TP decision-makers including WGE focal points from TP Women, Human Resource and Organizational Development, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and Communications and Marketing departments. Focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with TP employees with a mix of call center agents, quality assurance managers, training managers, and human resource specialists. These were held separately with seven male participants and nine female participants.

During the research period, TP staff were experiencing a heavy workload which meant fewer interviews and group discussions were held than anticipated. However, TP was cooperative in providing additional information to further substantiate the drafting of the case study.

Country Context

The Philippines is a strong advocate for gender equality and the country scores well on international gender equality measures and indices. It is ranked 19 out of 144 countries on the Global Gender Gap Index with an index score of 0.783 in 2022. This is above the global average score of 67.8.¹ Women have a higher life expectancy than men (76 years versus 67 years)², and on average girls receive slightly more years of schooling than boys (9.5 years versus 9.2 years). However, women continue to experience disadvantages in the labour market and this stems from gender inequality and entrenched discrimination towards women around what they can and should do in life. Consequently, women are overrepresented in the informal labour market where their work is precarious and poorly paid. Fewer than 50 percent of women participate in the formal labour market because they are largely working unpaid at home or in part time work. Women provide 85 percent of the total household time allocated

¹ Business World, "Philippines ranks 61st in gender equality list". April 26, 2022.

<https://www.bworldonline.com/infographics/2022/04/26/444315/philippines-ranks-61st-in-gender-equality-list/#:~:text=Thepercent20Philippinespercent20placedpercent2061percent20stpercent20outpercent20ofpercent20144,forpercent20allpercent20andpercent20apercent20healthpercent20environmentpercent20bypercent202030>.

² The World Bank Data, "Life expectancy at birth, female (years) - Philippines" last accessed 9 November 2022.

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.FE.IN?locations=PH> and The World Bank Data, "Life expectancy at birth, male (years) - Philippines" last accessed 9 November 2022. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.MA.IN?locations=PH>

to children. Men earn between 23 and 30 per cent more than women.³ Women are often ineligible for social security and health care, and they also experience limited access to justice.⁴

To tackle gender equality, the Philippine Government has put in place a strong legislative framework which includes:

- Republic Act 7877 (1995) known as the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act is the main Philippine legislation that defines and penalizes sexual harassment in the workplace, or in an education or training environment.
- The Magna Carta (2009) for women is a comprehensive women's rights law that upholds the rights of Filipinas, especially if they belong to marginalised sectors. It declares women are entitled to protection from all forms of violence, equal treatment before the law, and equal access to education.
- The New Telecommuting Act (2018) legitimizes working from home employment arrangements and ensures a legal framework for the rights of telecommuting workers.
- The Safe Spaces Act (2019) is intended to expand the scope of 1995 Anti-Sexual Harassment Act. It includes a list of offensive behaviour such as sexist slurs, unwanted invitations and taunting, and unwanted comments on the appearance of an individual amongst others.

Company Background

Teleperformance was established in the Philippines in 1996 and has grown to become a preferred offshore contact center outsourcing option operating in over 35,000 workstations in 24 business sites located across the country. TP serves several of the world's largest companies across a wide variety of industries through its customer care, technical support, customer acquisition, consulting and analytics, digital integrated business service solutions, and other high-value specialized services.

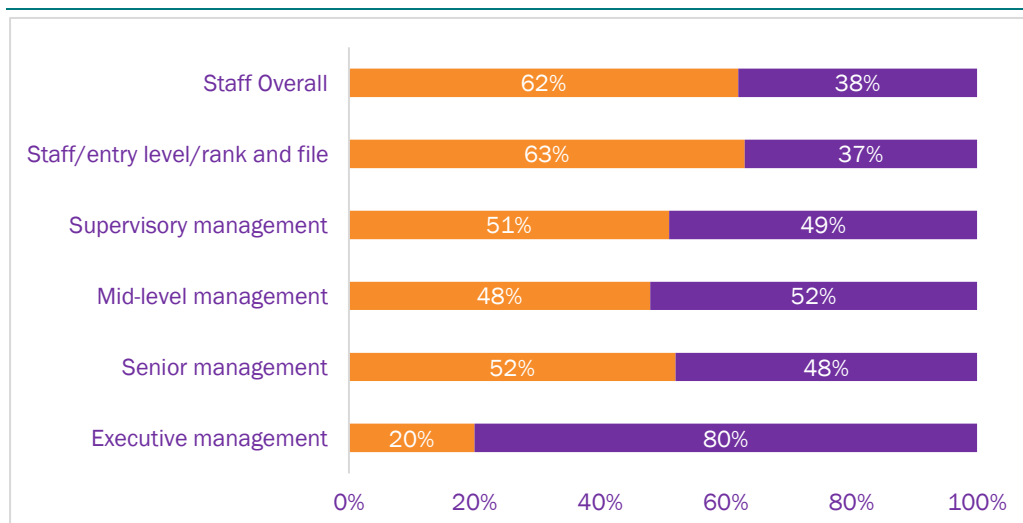
By the end of 2022, the company had over 60,000 employees, of whom 62 percent were women and 38 percent were men. Currently, at most levels of the organization, there is either a balanced gender composition or the ratio meets the 30 percent threshold⁵ with one exception at the executive management level where women are 23 percent (Figure 1). Board composition is 44 percent women and 56 percent men. For occupational subgroups, men dominate in Information and Communication Technology at 82 percent (women at 18 percent). However, for all other occupational subgroups women dominate in production and specialized services (51 percent), hospitality and service (54 percent), science and engineering (56 percent), health (68 percent), business administration (64 percent), legal and sociocultural (52 percent), and information and communication services (62 percent). Overall, TP has a high rate of staff turnover, as discussed further below.

³ Philippine News Agency March 31st, 2021. Philippines ranks 17th in Global Gender Gap Report. <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1135541>

⁴ UN Women Asia and the Pacific: CEDAW Philippines. <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/philippines/cedaw>

⁵ Based on threshold as set under Gender Equality Assessment, Results, and Strategies (GEARS) tool of 30 percent threshold in either male or female.

Figure 1 . Teleperformance Philippines Gender Composition of Staff by Level of Responsibility, March 2021.



Legend: ■ Female ■ Male

Source: GEARS Report 2022 – Teleperformance Philippines

Engaging on Workplace Gender Equality

Since 2018, PBCWE actively sought to recruit TP as a member of the coalition by inviting them to routine activities and trainings. However, it was only in 2021, when TP modified their HR and DE&I strategy to place more emphasis on flexible working, employee retention, diversity, and inclusion, and increasing the number of women in top level positions that the company was inspired to contact PBCWE and begin a formal engagement which began on 29th November 2021 (see Figure 2). Prior to this, the TP global HR DE&I team had supervised an initiative in 2015 called ‘TP Women’ which was aimed at improving the leadership capabilities of women employees through learning and dialogue.

The TP Philippines HR DE&I team now works closely with the Philippines TP Women Core Group and the TP Women Board on issues concerning WGE, diversity, and inclusion. The TP Women Core Group is composed of an all-female eight-person team from the senior executive to mid-level managers from five sections or departments, namely, Communications and Marketing, Human Resource Organisational Development (HROD), Business Development, Operations, and HR DE&I, which serves as the working team behind the activities of ‘TP Women.’

The TP Women Board, headed by the female senior director for Communications and Marketing, serves as an advisory group to the DE&I Committee and the Senior Leadership Team in addressing WGE. The board is composed of nine female and one male member who are senior executives and managers from the Communications and Marketing, Operations, Human Resources, Business Development, Organizational Development, Legal, and DE&I departments. The Organizational Development Section and the DE&I Sections under the Human Resource Department work closely with the TP Women Board and the TP Women Core Group on WGE issues.

TP approached PBCWE for expert guidance on how to achieve the company’s gender and DE&I strategy. TP was motivated to address WGE and DE&I from their own evidence and experience and that of PBCWE’s pool of mentors who provided convincing exposure to industry best practices. What motivated TP to partner with PBCWE was their reputation for high quality technical expertise and guidance on WGE.

‘We have already started a core group called TP Women which is part of the global initiative of TP. However, we wanted to add more meaning, purpose, and direction. We wanted to strategize [WGE] plans which are aligned with best practices through direction and guidance from experts.’

(TP Women Lead/WGE Focal [Female], FGD October 2022)

In the first instance, PBCWE led a group of TP staff (TP Women Board and TP Women Core Group) in a meeting of minds or a visioning exercise. Using a checklist, the visioning exercise confirmed and benchmarked TP's strong commitment to strengthen WGE in the company as part of their overall DE&I program strategy.

Over a three-month period from December 2021 to February 2022, PBCWE provided technical and learning assistance through meetings and training sessions to TP Women Core Group, TP Women Board, and other concerned business units such as HR Site Operations, HR Legal, and Compensation and Benefits Section.

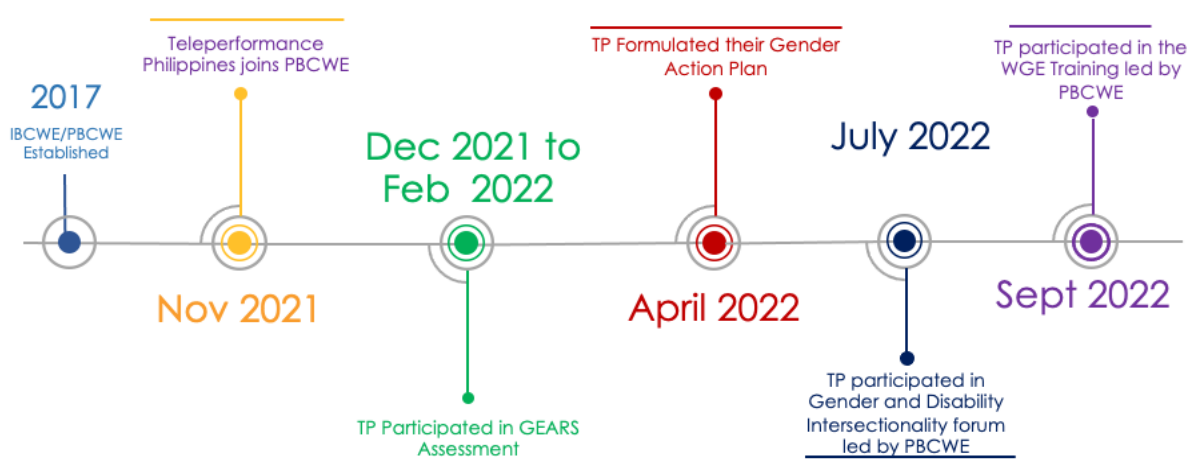
A key part of the learning process around WGE centered on an assessment tool used by the PBCWE called GEARS (Gender Equality Assessment Results and Strategies)⁶ PBCWE used GEARS to assess the status of WGE in the company drawing on an analysis of HR statistical data, that included for example, gender composition in the workplace, employee career progression, and policies and practices that support and promote WGE.

A training session on how to undertake the GEARS assessment was provided by PBCWE. The actual process of data collection and analysis took a month, and PBCWE conducted the data analysis and produced the final report for TP. The process and tool were new to TP, so PBCWE provided steady guidance and support.⁷

In April 2022, PBCWE presented the findings from the GEARS assessment to the TP Women Board representatives (Figure 2).⁸ PBCWE proposed these next steps:

- Sharing GEARS results, comments, and reflections to TP Women Core Group and to decide on areas to focus for the subsequent meeting with TP Women;
- Action planning and learning activities with TP Women Core Group;
- Communicating GEARS report widely within the company and externally; and
- Conducting a TP Employee Survey in 2022 to assess staff perceptions, knowledge, and insights on WGE.

Figure 2 Timeline on Teleperformance Philippines' Engagement with PBCWE on Workplace Gender Equality



⁶ GEARS is a regional-level assessment developed by four business coalitions in Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Vietnam with support from the Australian Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA).

⁷ TP Additional Information, January 24, 2023.

⁸ TP Additional Information, January 24, 2023.

Assessing TP's WGE

The GEARS assessment confirmed that TP had a strong vision for WGE, with a main priority of achieving workforce gender balance. TP's company goals for WGE included:

- Achieve 30 percent female representation at the executive committee level by 2023;
- Increase overall sense of diversity, equality, and inclusion in the company; and
- Become an industry champion in WGE and inclusion.

The GEARS assessment also found that:

- TP Philippines has policies and practices in nine out of ten GEARS focus areas with majority of the focus areas achieved 'strategic' status with areas for improvement.⁹ The assessment results show five out of ten focus area are rated strategic (recruitment, selection and promotion, flexible working, alignment of gender equality and business priorities, professional development, and workforce gender composition); and three focus areas are rated active¹⁰ (gender pay equity, preventing and addressing gender-based harassment and discrimination, and talent management and succession planning). The remaining focus area, (leadership and accountability) met minimum standards.
- The one area where TP scored lowest (zero) was WGE company-wide training. Prior to PBCWE's engagement with TP, there was no staff training on WGE.
- On gender composition, TP either has gender balance for most but not all levels or the company and it meets the 30 percent threshold¹¹ of either gender. Indeed, TP had relatively balanced gender composition, ranging from 37 percent and 63 percent of either gender in the senior management, mid-level management, supervisory management, and staff or entry level positions. However, TP did not meet the gender balance threshold at the executive management level, with only 20 percent female executive staff. Encouragingly, the company has a gender balance in its pipeline (e.g., junior staff who will get promoted) to mid to senior-level managers. The ratio of women to men at the board level shows good gender balance: 44:56.
- On staff retention, TP fell below the 90 percent threshold in 4 out of 5 levels, i.e., entry level staff, supervisory, mid-level, senior, and executive management levels. Only at the female executive level did the company achieve above the target level at 100 percent, compared to the male executive staff at 78 percent retention. In the four other employee levels, TP has low retention rates particularly for female and male entry level employees at 14 percent for each gender, which is six percent below the average retention rate of other PBCWE members in the BPO sector. Female retention rates at the supervisory (70 percent), mid-level (81 percent), and senior management levels (88 percent) are slightly higher than the male retention rates at 66 percent, 77 percent, and 79 percent, respectively.
- Overall, TP was found to promote and hire slightly more women than men overall (52 percent and 63 percent women versus 48 percent and 37 percent men). However, at the senior levels the reverse is true and many more men than women benefit: only one female was promoted to senior management, and none were promoted to executive management positions during the reporting period. All executive managers recruited externally were male.

The GEARS assessment provided TP with a set of ten priority actions for consideration, with three high impact action items. The full list of actions is detailed in Table 1. PBCWE identified three strategic actions that would have high impact for TP to accelerate, optimize, expand, replicate, model and promote and these are flagged in red in the table below.

Table 1 GEARS Recommendations to Teleperformance

⁹ Under GEARS, 'strategic' means receiving a score between 51 to 75 out of 100, which means that the company has organization-wide alignment of gender equality in support of business priorities.

¹⁰ Under GEARS, active level means receiving a score between 26 to 50 out of 100, which means the company turns ideas into actions, supported by communicating commitment to gender equality.

¹¹ Based on threshold as set under Gender Equality Assessment, Results, and Strategies (GEARS) tool of 30 percent threshold in either male or female.

GEARS Focal Areas	Recommendations
1. Workplace Gender Equality Training (high impact measure)	Require mandatory completion of the gender equality trainings for both employees and leaders.
2. Leadership and Accountability on WGE (high impact measure)	Introduce an accountability mechanism for managers regarding gender equality progress and outcomes.
3. Talent Management and Succession Planning (high impact measure)	Monitor, analyse, and compare results of performance appraisals and talent reviews by gender.
4. Strategic alignment of gender equality and business priorities	Allocate adequate resources to implement gender equality strategy/policy.
5. Gender Pay Equity	Communicate compensation practices, pay equity gaps particularly pay levels, and actions to close the gap internally to all employees and externally.
6. Workforce Gender Composition	Monitor and analyse employee retention, resignations, and return rates coming from maternity, paternity, parental and other long-term leave.
7. Mainstream flexible work for performance and support	Offer employer-funded paid parental leave other than leave entitlements mandated by law.
8. Preventing and addressing gender-based harassment and discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying, domestic and family violence	Introduce a policy and/or strategy to support employees who are experiencing harassment and discrimination,
9. Professional development, mentoring and sponsorship	Monitor and analyse the number of employees in learning and development programs by gender and introduce formal sponsorship programs.
10. Recruitment, Selection, and Promotion	Monitor, analyse, and act on data from every stage of recruitment by gender. Ensure applications are evaluated by gender-balanced panels.

Source: GEARS Diagnostic Report for Teleperformance Philippines, March 2022.

The case study research found that TP staff welcomed the findings of the GEARS assessment. Having valued PBCWE's technical support on the GEARS process, the company decided to include in their GEARS Action Plan not only the three high impact recommendations but all ten recommendations. Staff interviewed said GEARS provided more structure and direction to the company's ongoing WGE programs and activities.

'The main benefit from the GEARS is that it was able to put our ongoing WGE programs and activities into proper form and structure.'

(TP DE&I Manager [Male], FGD October 2022)

The TP's HROD Director noted that GEARS brought essential clarity to a complex process that is not always well-understood.

'GEARS put us all on the same page, same perspective on the [WGE/gender] language, on what it means and what it does not mean, what is the right approach, and what is an outdated approach.'

(TP HROD Director [Female], FGD October 2022)

TP's GEARS action plan to improve WGE and women's inclusion.

Following the GEARS assessment, the PBCWE facilitated an action planning workshop with TP to formulate a Gender Action Plan. The Gender Action Plan laid out the key activities and completion target dates for the ten focus areas. Table 2 presents the summary Gender Action Plan of TP with progress as of December 2022. Work is still broadly in progress.

Table 2 TP's progress on its Gender Equality Action Plan, December 2022.

GEARS Focus Areas and Actions	Progress as of December 2022
1. WGE training for TP Women Site Leads, course development, prototyping and trainers' training, and full roll out of TP WGE Course.	Work in progress to develop and roll our mandatory WGE training to all staff: WGE Training conducted on September 20 (virtual) and September 23 (hybrid), 2022 with 38 participants.
2. Present GEARS output to Senior Leadership team, review DE&I accountabilities, and introduce and activate the DE&I senior leaders scorecard.	GEARS output presented in April 2022. Change in TP Women Board composition and hiring of a full-time support staff to ensure WGE accountability
3. Review promotion paths of incumbents Bands 1 and 2.	Work in progress.
4. Finalize new DE&I Committee and TP Women Working Group composition. Propose resource allocation for gender equality initiatives.	Change in TP Women Board composition and designation of TP Women Core Team and a full-time support staff.
5. Conduct Gender Pay Gap analysis and submit to Senior Leadership, communicate compensation practices and actions to close pay gap to employees and external.	Pay Gap Analysis study underway.
6. Provide bi-annual gender baseline report to Sr leaders; Analyse data on employee retention, resignation, and return rates	Preparation of 2022 end of year report with promotions and recruitments by gender.
7. Conduct FGD with women working at home/remote; Develop development program for parents/caregivers; Build the case for Care Giver leave	Work in progress
8. Formalize partnership with Lunas Collective for Helpline; Establish monitoring system for grievances related to harassment, discrimination, bullying, etc.	Formalized partnership with Lunas Collective.
9. Assess talent development plan, reinforce TP Women commitment to TP Tribe, and launch of sponsorship program.	Work in progress.
10. Introduce gender balanced sourcing, recruitment, hiring, selection to Recruitment teams.	Conducted #BreaktheBias Digital Forum in March 2022.

Source: GEARS Action Plan Teleperformance, December 2022.

The results of the GEARS have not yet been communicated to the TP staff; however, the GEARS Action Plan have been used as the framework of TP Women activities since April 2022. The proposed TP Employee Survey intends to collect gender-disaggregated HR data for 2023 to set the baseline and monitor the progress of the WGE target under the GEARS Action Plan.

Delivering Change and Impact

The TP Women Core Group has been at the forefront of driving gender equality in the company. It was this core group that motivated senior leaders to join PBCWE and to develop a strategy to improve WGE. Although implementation of the WGE strategy is still in its early days, there are some notable changes that have been captured in staff interviews for this case study. However, changes are still ongoing and evolving as the company's partnership with PBCWE continues.

Most notably, TP's engagement with PBCWE and GEARS has: (i) enhanced staff understanding of WGE concepts, issues, and approaches; (ii) established WGE and anti-sexual harassment (ASH) training as mandatory courses for all staff; (iii) improved WGE planning; (iv) improved leaders' accountability, skills, and knowledge, and (v) facilitated the development of a gender sensitive approach to promotion, recruitment, and selection processes to overcome bias and promote gender equality.

Enhanced understanding of WGE

Before PBCWE engagement, TP's DE&I team based their approach to improving WGE on global company strategies, employee feedback, industry best practices, and ideas they found on the internet. In 2021, the core team realized there was a general lack of understanding around among management and staff on what WGE really means and how to best approach it. The GEARS tool and process played a clear role in demystifying terms and concepts and providing a strategy and pathway for action.

'We have been implementing our gender equality program basically by pulling ideas from everywhere, from different experiences, employee feedback, company data, and downloaded from [TP] global initiatives. GEARS was able to put everything into a structure.'

(TP DE&I Manager [Male], FGD October 2022)

Post the GEARS assessment, training on WGE provided by PBCWE to company leaders, decision-makers and staff resulted to a better understanding of key concepts and definitions, terminology, insight into relevant issues, and global best practices and approaches to improve WGE. In interviews and discussions, staff say this has led to a better understanding and awareness on WGE concepts including how to anchor the next actions of the company.

'[Before] the GEAR assessment we didn't know the basic [WGE] terms and [concepts] or [that] we needed to discuss this with staff. The main benefit from GEARS and the WGE trainings [facilitated by PBCWE] was to understand the real definition of WGE and implications for DE&I and our work. It provided a better awareness among key WGE focal points like [me] to help us move the company forward.'

(TP DE&I Manager [Male], FGD October 2022)

Also, TP's SVP on HR noted the role PBCWE in facilitating greater understanding on gender equality in the workplace and how it relates specifically to the IT BPO industry. Moreover, the interactions with PBCWE during trainings, learning sessions, and meetings, helped ensure that both groups speak the same language which resulted in a more facilitative and open discussion on complex issues.

'What I really appreciated about PBCWE was a lot of them even came from our industry. It gave me assurance that they understand what we are doing and what is doable within the IT BPO sector.'

(TP Senior Vice President on HR [Male], Interview, November 2022)

Establishing WGE and ASH training as mandatory courses

Following the GEARS assessment PBCWE and TP agreed that staff training on WGE and ASH was a priority to deepen knowledge and understanding about gender inequality, sexual harassment, and violence. The first WGE training for 27 staff (men and women) was conducted in September 2022 and it was directed at TP Women Core Team and site leaders. TP is working with PBCWE to refine the training modules and roll out a program for all employees.

'Using the GEARS Action Plan, we were able to identify which areas need improvement. When we received zero score on WGE Training, we immediately timetabled a September [2022 training].'

(TP DE&I Manager [Male], FGD Oct 2022)

To adhere to the Philippines Safe Spaces Act of 2019, TP introduced an ASH policy and related action agenda. Prior to GEARS, ASH training for employees was not mandatory but the GEARS checklist of questions inspired a more evolved approach:

'Answering GEARS Checklist questions on whether the induction program or essential employee training includes a training on prevention of gender-based harassment and discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying at the workplace prompted TP to set the ASH e-learning as a mandatory course.'

(TP DE&I Team [Male and Female], Additional Information, November 2022)

The TP DE&I team also noted that the GEARS process had resulted in TP engaging *Lunas Collective*, a volunteer organization, to establish an independent helpline for employees who have concerns or who want to know more about gender-based harassment/violence or discrimination or bullying in the workplace.¹²

'The GEARS and Gender Action Planning influenced the HROD and DE&I leads to expand the mechanisms to prevent and address gender-based harassment and discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying by formalizing partnership with Lunas Collective this year.'

(TP DE&I Team [Male and Female], Additional Information, November 2022)

Improved WGE planning

Since 2015 TP Philippines was engaged with the company's global agenda to promote women leaders in the workplace and to strengthen DE&I programs. For this initiative, TP Women provided leadership, mentoring and capacity building activities with support from the International Labour Organization's Women in STEM¹³ Program, and Google's #IamRemarkable Program. However, the company's relationship with PBCWE and their engagement in GEARS provided more tangible and practical guidance on action planning for WGE. One important insight from WGE action planning was TP staff realizing that gender equality is not just limited to an agenda for women: men are also a gender and the relationship between men and women in the workplace matters.

'We felt that there is disconnect in implementing the engagement and marketing activities of our employee resource groups [i.e., TP Women, TP Pride] with the DEI/WGE strategies, policies, procedures, and metrics of the company. The engagement with PBCWE gave us the foundation and the direction in aligning our DEI/WGE priorities and actions. For example, while we wanted to achieve gender parity at all levels of our organization, the top

¹² <https://helpfromhome.ph/lunas-collective-2/>

¹³ The ILO's Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Programme aims to empower, connect and support career development of women. The ILO Women in STEM project is supported by the J.P. Morgan and is being piloted in Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines.

band (executive level) female representation remained low. That is when we realized that there should be systemic changes in the promotions and recruitment procedures to achieve gender parity in the company.'

(TP Senior Vice President on HR [Male], Interview, November 2022)

According to the TP Women Core Group, TP's WGE planning is now strategically focused for 2023. Where there were limited targets for WGE before TP's engagement with PBCWE, there are now clear targets in each of the ten focus areas and TP is now collecting, analysing, and monitoring their HR data accordingly. TP's WGE planning is focused on meeting global WGE targets, such as achieving the 30 percent gender balance threshold at all levels, gender balanced recruitment, selection, and promotion procedures, gender pay equity, and staff training on WGE. WGE targets on leadership, accountability, and strategic alignment of gender equality and business priorities are driving the collection and analysis of DE&I metrics at company and departmental levels. A key change in data analysis is the application of a gender lens to compare outcomes for male and female employees.¹⁴

'With the guidance from GEARS, we were able to identify parameters, such as on leadership and accountability, gender composition in the workplace, WGE training, recruitment, selection, and promotion, etc. to assess our current [WGE] initiatives and redirect and make enhancements for fine tuning.'

(TP Women Lead, WGE Focal [Female], FGD Oct 2022)

'We know our diversity numbers, but we didn't know how to interpret it before our GEARS assessment and WGE Action Planning. We have operational targets to increase women representation at the executive level and these have been put into spotlight, increasing it from 9 percent in 2021 to 23 percent in 2022. Moving forward, probably 80 percent of our departmental plans were [informed] by GEARS.'

(TP DE&I Manager [Male], FGD Oct 2022; TP Senior Vice President [Male], Human Capital Resource Management, Interview Nov 2022)

The Senior Vice President (SVP) on Human Capital Resource Management (HR), said he was motivated by the GEARS assessment to conduct a gender pay gap analysis which is currently underway.

'The program of action on gender pay equity under GEARS is what I was really interested in. When I initially looked at our data, I didn't see any [gender pay gap] issues. In fact, I think our female staff earn more than their male counterpart by band [or level]. But, I know it is more complex than that. Our organization needs help to understand what type of metrics should we be looking at [related to gender pay equity] and what changes are needed to ensure that it doesn't become a problem in the future.'

(TP Senior Vice President on HR [Male], Interview, November 2022)

Overall, TP Women's Strategy has evolved from having only leadership training and program awareness activities¹⁵ to adopting all ten GEARS recommendations in the company Gender Action Plan. GEARS

¹⁴ TP Additional Information, January 24, 2023.

¹⁵ The TP Women PH Strategy developed in 2020 had two main objectives: (a) drive leadership trainings, workshops, and other initiatives that help improve the leadership capabilities of a TP woman and ultimately drive better representation in the management and leadership positions, and (b) raise overall employee awareness of the TP Women initiative and strengthen movement across the board. The key strategies included (a) leverage multi-channel approach within and outside the organization to develop female leaders thru workshops, seminars, learning sessions, and third-party conferences, and (b) increase purposeful engagement and refine ways to foster and solidify program awareness thru TP Women forums, focus groups discussion, roadshows, outreach activities, recognition programs, etc.

has become the anchor of TP's gender goals and strategies and the company's benchmark in applying for local and global certifications on DE&I and gender equality.¹⁶

'The GEARS and Gender Action Planning influenced the company leads in improving the TP Women PH Strategy from conducting promotion or awareness activities on TP Women Program to adopting the 10-point GEARS action areas as the main WGE plan.'

(TP DE&I Team [Male and Female], Additional Information, November 2022)

The TP DE&I Manager noted how GEARS helped put in place a system of monitoring and reporting on staff promotions and appointments that captured data on gender. The information on promotions and appointments by gender will now be featured in the company's annual report.¹⁷

'The specific question on the GEARS checklist related to the monitoring and analysis of data on promotions and appointments by gender influenced the HROD and DE&I to include this information in the end of year report for 2022.'

(TP DE&I Team [Male and Female], Additional Information, November 2022)

Improvements to leaders' accountability, skills, and knowledge

Before the PBCWE engagement, the WGE-related accountabilities were lodged under the larger DE&I program with targets specified under the TP Women Program. The WGE-related tasks were handled by DE&I leads and the TP Women Board with limited bandwidths due to existing workloads. After the GEARS and WGE Action Planning, TP is now more accountable to the WGE targets through (a) formation of a TP Women Core Group, who's KPI is to deliver GEARS Action Plan, together with the TP Women Board, and (b) hiring of a dedicated support staff, to increase the bandwidth on DE&I/WGE efforts

According to the TP DE&I Manager, there are notable changes amongst key leaders in their knowledge and skills concerning WGE. These changes have come about through the learning events and member meetings with PBCWE as these helped TP Women Core and DE&I groups to learn in practical ways about industry best practices and benchmarks and key terms and concepts.

The Action Plan recommended training to introduce core WGE concepts such as gender bias, and the intersection between gender and disability amongst other topics. PBCWE was a resource speaker in three learning sessions including:

- (a) Introductory WGE Training in September 2022 attended by the TP Women Core Team and site leaders in September 2022;
- (b) #BreaktheBias Digital Forum livestreamed through the TP Philippines Facebook page in March 2022; and
- (c) Gender and Disability Intersectionality Forum in July 2022.

The training was very well received, and majority of participants (71 percent) gave positive feedback that it met their expectations and the materials provided were relevant and useful. TP participants also said they felt they could confidently talk about WGE to other people. Nearly 30 percent of participants called for a longer time for training. Participants found the introductory WGE session was vital for aligning their thinking and understanding and a valuable start for the relaunch of the TP Women program (PBCWE 2022).

TP participated in the quarterly and annual membership meetings with PBCWE in 2022. TP was also invited to represent PBCWE in two national level trainings organised with PBCWE partners and the Gender Working Group where they shared their WGE/DE&I programs including GEARS. TP staff say that

¹⁶ TP Additional Information, January 24, 2023.

¹⁷ This is in line with their company's vision of achieving 30 percent female representation at the executive level, hence the monitoring and reporting of the number of female executives who were promoted or appointed will serve as a starting point for pushing the numbers up.

support from PBCWE in the form of learning activities, national level trainings, and meetings have guided the company in their WGE planning.

The learnings, the exposure to events, and the guidance [by PBCWE], guided us in our plans. For example, our plan now includes increasing the female participants for the mentoring program for the director and senior manager levels.'

(TP Senior Vice President on HR [Male], Interview, November 2022)

Gender sensitive promotion, recruitment, and selection processes

Prior to joining PBCWE, TP's recruitment and selection of female executives relied solely on women applicants applying for a post. After GEARS and WGE Action Planning, TP became more proactive in their recruitment and selection of female candidates for the executive posts.

As part of its WGE Action Plan, TP now purposefully seeks gender balance in company recruitment, selection, and promotion procedures as part of its revised Jump Program. The HR department now proactively looks for suitable female candidates and encourages them to apply. This is a step change from the earlier non-targeted approach. GEARS is responsible for this change, as explained by the TP HROD Director.

'The marketing of the Jump Program (promotion and leadership program) was enhanced with a targeted rather than a generic 'spray and pray' approach. Answering GEARS in relation to monitoring and analysis of promotions and appointments by gender, made us ask questions as to how we are marketing the program, i.e., number of women who applied, graduated, and promoted thru the program, and also in designing and monitoring the program to support the DEI direction.'

(TP HROD Director [Female], FGD Oct 2022)

TP's recent vacant Vice-President post was also offered to qualified women candidates, instead of waiting for them to apply. The promotion of a women executive increased the female representation in Band 1 from 9 percent to 25 percent in just one year (2022).¹⁸

'If we had just done what we would normally do, we will probably get the same results [of low female representation at the executive level]. We need to engage more female leaders, that's why we offered the vacant vice president positions to qualified female candidates instead of waiting for applicants. So, we went from nine percent [female] representation in Band 1 to 25 percent in just one year.'

(TP Senior Vice President [Male], Human Capital Resource Management, Interview Nov 2022)

¹⁸ TP Updated and Evidence for Triple Line, November 2022.

WGE Drivers of Change

Based on a review of practice and experience, IW identified seven drivers of change or ‘critical ingredients’ required to achieve WGE.¹⁹ This section identifies the most important key drivers observed in TP’s journey of change in their order of importance.

Sustained leadership, commitment and accountability.

The most prominent driver of change for TP is their leadership, commitment, and accountability particularly at the mid-level and senior management level from the TP Women Core Group and TP Women Board. Their initial focus was on achieving broad DE&I targets but they also acknowledged a need to integrate clear WGE targets which necessitated new knowledge and learning about WGE issues and approaches. Company leaders felt a sense of accountability to ensure gender balance, a gender-inclusive workplace at TP and a conducive workplace. The views of the TP Global Chief Client Officer below were echoed by others during interviews, including the TP Women Chair, and PBCWE technical staff.

‘We actively advocate for gender equality and have made significant strides in achieving workforce balance. Currently, 52 percent of our global employee base is comprised of women. However, that doesn’t mean our work is done. We must continue our mission as evangelists for achieving and sustaining equality – both within Teleperformance and beyond.’

(TP Global Chief Client Officer and TP Women Chair [Female], PBCWE and TP Meeting of the Minds, Nov 2021)

Leadership is backed up with dedicated resources to improve WGE which have been used to form the TP Women Core Group and to hire full-time support staff since July 2022.

Defined company strategy to promote gender equality

TP’s gender equality strategy, implemented since 2015 has played an important part in driving the company’s quest for further guidance and learning on WGE from PBCWE. The strategy has also led to the creation of TP Women and TP Pride employee engagement network groups which in turn have further strengthened the company’s commitment to address gender issues and take affirmative action to promote WGE.

‘TP Women is TP’s global network of women and allies dedicated to celebrating the achievements of women in Teleperformance. It seeks to address women’s issues in the workplace and help drive positive change.’

(TP and PBCWE Meeting of the Minds, Nov 2021)

Motivational awards

WGE and related awards have played an important role in sustaining company action to continually improve indicators of success. TP was recently awarded a Great Place to Work ® Certification. Their DE&I indicators have always received high scores under this award and the company strives to maintain or improve the scores on an annual basis. The implementation of the WGE Action Plan and continuing collaboration with PBCWE have and will continue to contribute to positioning for the achievement of awards and certifications related to DE&I and WGE.

‘For the Great Place to Work Award, while we do get quite high scores [on DE&I indicators, this year we went even higher scores.’

(TP HROD Director [Female], FGD Oct 2022)

¹⁹ Investing in Women, 2022. ‘Drivers of Change for Workplace Gender Equality’ Available online at <https://investinginwomen.asia/knowledge/drivers-of-change-for-workplace-gender-equality/>

Gender equality data, insights, and analytics

The company's HR data has played an important role in increasing TP's understanding of their current WGE status and how to move forward with it. Prior to their engagement with PBCWE, the company routinely conducted data gathering but they were not so clear about how to process or analyse it and use the results to inform the development of a strategy, targets and indicators. The data gathered and analysed for GEARS gave TP insight on what to focus on and how. Having gender-disaggregated baseline data was critical for the company's ability to monitor its progress in developing and implementing its WGE Action Plan.

'I think a very valuable output from GEARS is that we were able to understand and process our [HR] data. We always had that data, but we never knew how to process it, and see whether we are compliant with the [WGE metrics on] gender balance, or to compare year on year our progress.'

(TP DE&I Manage [Male], FGD Oct 2022)

Trusted local technical support

PBCWE played an important role in supporting TP to integrate WGE into their DE&I agenda. They provided technical support and guidance to TP, and they facilitated the company in using GEARS which helped them understand where they stood, and what areas needed more work. PBCWE helped TP understand how WGE intersects with the other DE&I aspects, such as disability, age, and race.

'With expert guidance from PBCWE via GEARS, we were able to identify parameters, such as on leadership and accountability, gender composition in the workplace, WGE training, recruitment, selection, and promotion, etc. to assess our current [WGE] initiatives and redirect and make enhancements for fine tuning.'

(TP Women Lead [Female], WGE Focal, FGD Oct 2022)

'One of the benefits of our partnership with PBCWE is to have that technical expert perspective on the [WGE] discussion.'

(TP DE&I Manage [Male], FGD Oct 2022)

Gender equality knowledge and skills

TP staff say that their company's participation in GEARS followed by the WGE Action Planning, WGE Training, and membership meetings has deepened their understanding of WGE but also of the gaps which need to be addressed. Gaining new knowledge and a better appreciation of the WGE concepts and approaches has motivated TP to improve training for staff on WGE issues so staff share a common understanding. It has also improved key processes where gender bias can arise such as recruitment, selection and promotion, and the company have put in place accountability measures as well as processes to both mitigate against and address gender-based harassment and discrimination should it arise. The company is still in the process of fully completing all these steps. Those leading strategy and actions recognise the importance of ensuring all TP employees share the same understanding and values.

Conclusion and Lessons

TP already had a strong hand when it came to a company-wide commitment to DE&I at a global level. The company's engagement with PBCWE helped key leaders recognise why WGE matters and integrate it into their broader strategy. What distinguishes TP is the decision taken by its leaders, post GEARS to focus on all ten recommendations for actions, rather the three recommendations initially put forward by the PBCWE. Such action demonstrates not just commitment but a desire to tackle all obstacles to gender equality in the workplace, not just some.

Although these are early days, case study research with TP leaders and staff suggest that there are tangible results that are emerging. For example, an enhanced understanding of WGE concepts, issues, and approaches; establishing WGE and ASH training as mandatory courses for all staff; improvements to WGE planning processes; and in processes where gender bias is often reproduced (recruitment and selection processes and promotion).

TP staff testify that the company's WGE initiatives has become more structured, strategic and focused as a result of the GEARS and WGE Action Planning. The WGE and DE&I strategies are now based on global WGE standards and perspectives, and the DE&I metrics are driven by WGE targets. The WGE targets have also become the key targets for achieving higher scores for the Great Place to Work® rating.

These early WGE changes in TP would not be possible without the sustained leadership, commitment, and accountability of the company. PBCWE played, and continues to play, an essential role in providing technical guidance and encouragement.

There are some important lessons from TP's engagement with PBCWE on WGE:

- The company's constant drive and willingness to go further than required. TP is one of the largest and oldest BPO's in the Philippines. The company is considered as best practice leader on DE&I initiatives and yet it recognised that more could be done on WGE. Key staff in the company were willing to engage, listen and act on the knowledge they gained in engaging with PBCWE and undergoing GEARS.
- The leadership dynamic in TP includes not just senior executives but also mid-level managers, and staff who have acted in concert to drive change forward.
- TP had a strong foundation on related WGE issues and yet the engagement with the PBCWE brought additional benefits in terms of structure and clarity around what issues matter, action planning and demystifying key terms and deepening knowledge.
- While there are some notable early changes it will take time to realize all the results that will come from tackling all ten recommendations put forward by GEARS. It's important for the company to capture impact and to demonstrate why going the extra miles matters.